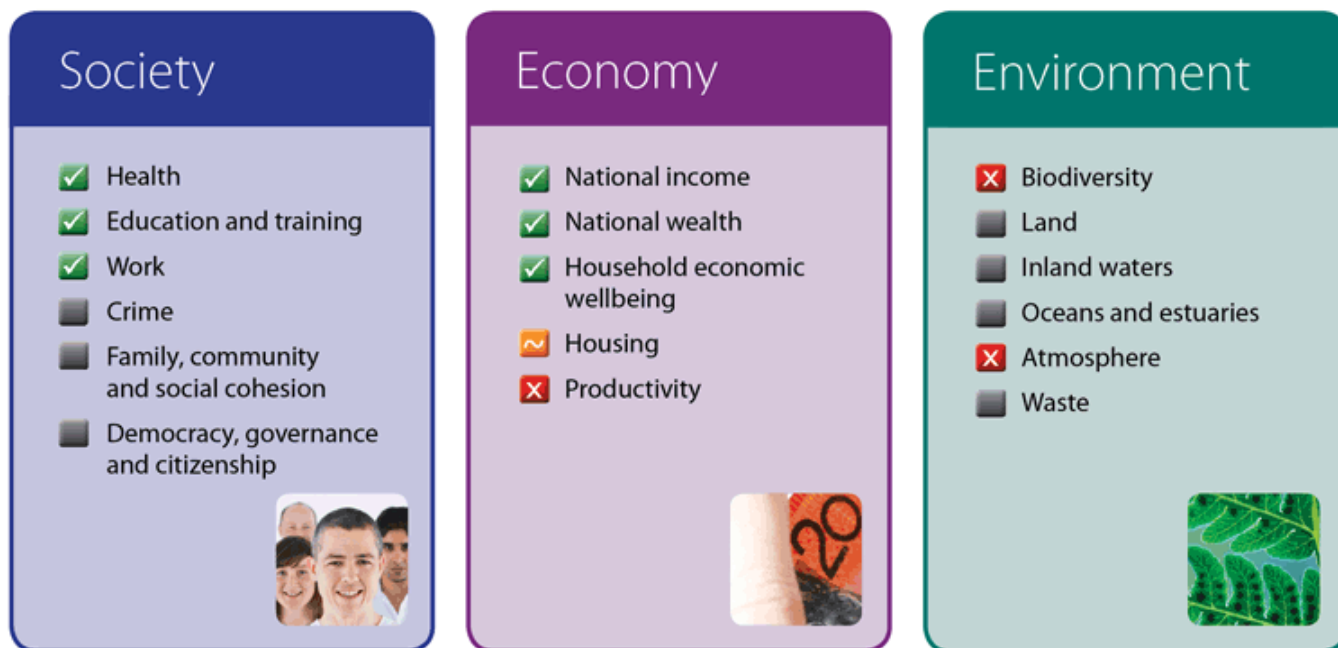


MEASURES OF AUSTRALIA'S PROGRESS 2011

IS LIFE IN AUSTRALIA GETTING BETTER?

Measures of Australia's Progress consultation reports back



Legend:

- ✓ Progress has generally been made in this headline indicator compared with ten years ago.
- ✗ This headline indicator has generally regressed compared with ten years ago.
- ~ There has been no significant movement in this headline indicator compared with ten years ago.
- There is either no headline indicator for this area of progress or no time series

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About MAP

Measures of Australia's Progress is designed to help Australians address the question, 'Is life in Australia getting better?'. MAP provides a digestible selection of statistical evidence in answer to this question. Australians can use this evidence to form their own view of how our country is progressing.

The range of key statistical measures that MAP presents demonstrate change. They are grouped under three broad headings: the society, the economy and the environment.

Within these broad domains several dimensions are addressed, such as health and work within the social domain, national income within the economic domain, and biodiversity within the environmental domain. Within most of these dimensions a headline indicator which directly addresses the notion of progress is used to tell a story about the extent of progress within that dimension.

This summary publication, Measures of Australia's Progress: Summary Indicators, 2011 (cat. no. 1370.0.55.001), is designed to present a short summary of the headline indicators for each of the main dimensions over the last decade.

The more comprehensive publication, Measures of Australia's Progress (cat .no. 1370.0), was last published in 2010 and provides a much more comprehensive discussion of progress within each dimension, presenting additional progress indicators and contextual information for each. In addition, for some dimensions, information that relates to specific groups of interest, such as older people, men and women, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is included.

ADDITIONAL 'ABOUT MAP' INFORMATION FROM THE LAST FULL MAP PUBLICATION

(Note: These links will take you to Measures of Australia's Progress 2010)

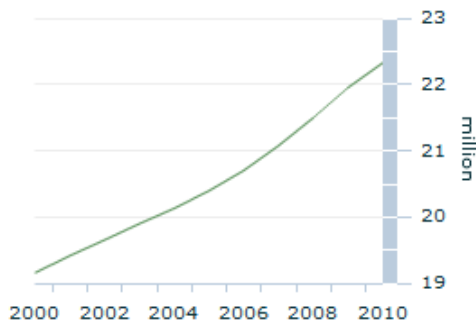
- [Preface](#)
- [What is MAP?](#)
- [Why did the ABS develop MAP?](#)
- [How does MAP differ from other ABS publications?](#)
- [What process was undertaken in developing MAP?](#)
- [Whose values and preferences are reflected in MAP?](#)
- [What is the ABS role in measuring progress?](#)
- [What approach did the ABS take in presenting progress data?](#)
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- [How is 'progress' defined in MAP 2010?](#)
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Population

The Australian population(a)



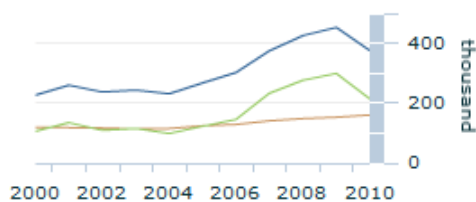
Population

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Footnote(s): (a) As at 30 June.

Source(s): ABS Australian Demographic Statistics, December 2010 (cat. no. 3101.0)

The Australian population - components of growth(a)



Population growth

Natural increase

Net overseas migrati...

Save Chart Image

Footnote(s): (a) Year ending 30 June. (b) Contains a break in series at 30 June 2006. See NOM in the glossary.

Source(s): ABS Australian Demographic Statistics, December 2010 (cat. no. 3101.0)

Many dimensions of Australia's progress are influenced by the number of people who usually live in Australia, together with their demographic characteristics and distribution. In turn, many dimensions of progress also influence the size and shape of Australia's population.

At June 2010, Australia's resident population was estimated at 22.3 million people. Australia's population has increased by approximately 3.1 million since 2000, when it was recorded at 19.2 million.

Australia's annual population growth rate for the year ending June 2010 was 1.7%. Although higher than in 2000 (1.2%), the 2010 annual population growth rate was lower than the previous year (2.1%), its highest level for the decade.

While there has been a natural increase in the population (the excess of births over deaths) each year in the last decade, the size of this natural increase has generally grown over the last seven years (114,400 in 2003 and 161,500 in 2010). A decreased death rate and increased fertility rate in recent years are the major components of this shift.

The other component of population growth, net overseas migration, varies from year to year depending on government policy as well as political, social and economic conditions. From 2000 to 2006, net overseas

migration contributed similar numbers to the population as did natural increase. Since 2007 however, Australia's population increase has been driven mainly by net overseas migration. Net overseas migration reached its highest level of the decade in 2009 (313,400 persons) but fell back to 215,600 in 2010.

During the decade 2000-2010, the median age of Australia's population increased from 35.2 years to 36.9 years. Over this period, the proportion of the population aged 0-14 years decreased (20.5% down to 18.9%) whilst the proportion of people aged 65 and over increased (from 12.3% to 13.6%).

Over the decade to June 2010, the sex ratio of the total population for Australia did not change (99.2 males per 100 females) although there were differences by age. In both 2000 and 2010, the ratio of males to females was higher in younger ages, whilst greater female longevity saw a higher number of females than males in the older years.

For a more detailed view of the changing age and sex structure of the Australian population try out the ABS animated population pyramids.

For a more in-depth discussion about how Australia's population and how it is changing, please see the Population chapter in [Measures of Australia's Progress, 2010](#) (cat. no. 1370.0).

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Society

A major driving force in human activity is the desire for optimal health, better living conditions and improved quality of life. Individuals seek to achieve these for themselves, for their family, and for the communities they are part of. A fundamental objective of government is to create better conditions of living for the population, and many community groups and private organisations also work towards this objective.

In this commentary, social progress involves increases in the wellbeing of the population; a reduction of threats to, and increases in, social cohesion; and protection and enhancement of democratic rights.

The headline dimensions that help Australians assess whether our society has progressed include:

- Health
- Education and training
- Work
- Crime
- Family, community and social cohesion
- Democracy, governance and citizenship

People hope to have a long life, free from pain, illness or disability, and this also benefits society by reducing health care costs. Good health for all brings social and economic benefits to individuals, their families and the wider community.

Education and training help people develop knowledge and skills that may be used to enhance their living standards, contribute to society and sustain and extend their cultural traditions. For an individual, educational attainment is widely seen as a key factor to a rewarding career and broader wellbeing. For the nation as a whole, having a skilled workforce is vital to supporting ongoing economic development and improvements in living conditions.

Paid work is the means through which many people obtain economic resources for themselves and their dependants, needed for day to day living and to meet their longer-term financial needs. Having paid work also contributes to a person's sense of identity and self-esteem. People's involvement in paid work also supports economic growth and development.

Crime can have a major impact on the wellbeing of victims, their families and friends, and the wider community. Those most directly affected may suffer financially, physically, and emotionally, while the fear of crime can affect communities by restricting people's lives and reducing levels of trust and social cohesion. Other societal and economic costs include those associated with the provision of law enforcement and corrective services and with redressing damage to individuals, communities and public facilities.

Families and communities are the building blocks of society and national life. The quality and strength of people's relationships and bonds with others - their family, friends and the wider community - are important ingredients of a cohesive and inclusive society. Families generate care and guidance which support the development of healthy functioning individuals and the values underlying civil society. The vast range of services provided within communities by groups, clubs and charitable organisations are a crucial adjunct to support the role of the family.

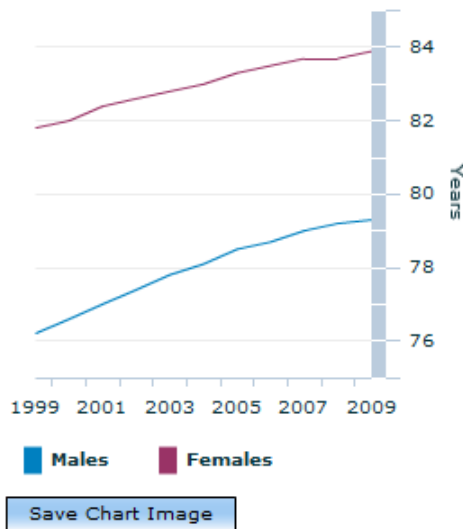
Good, effective governance helps strengthen democracy and human rights, promote economic prosperity and social cohesion, reduce poverty, enhance environmental protection and the sustainable use of natural resources, and deepen confidence in government and administration. Supporting effective governance are many factors such as the fairness of our society, the health of our democracy and the extent to which the citizens of Australia actively participate in democracy and civic life.

While not given headline status, 'Culture and leisure', 'Communication', and 'Transport' are included as supplementary dimensions in MAP because of their relevance to whether life in Australia is getting better. For a discussion of these supplementary dimensions, please see the more comprehensive publication *Measures of Australia's Progress, 2010* (cat. no. 1370.0).



Health

Life expectancy at birth



Source(s): ABS Deaths, Australia, 2009 (cat. no. 3302.0)

Good health directly, and indirectly, improves the wellbeing of individuals and the broader community. For an individual, good health means a life free of the burdens of illness (pain, social isolation, financial costs, and restrictions to lifestyle choices). For the nation, a healthy population is more able to contribute to society in various ways, such as through participation in employment, education and social or community activities. A good level of health also brings about reduced direct costs to the community, both in terms of financial and human capital (such as through lower health care costs and reduced death rates).

While an indicator describing how long Australians live that simultaneously takes into account quality of life would be a desirable summary measure of progress, currently no such measure exists. Life expectancy at birth is one of the most widely used and internationally recognised indicators of population health. It focuses on the length of life rather than its quality, and provides a useful summary of the general health of the population.

During the decade 1999 to 2009, life expectancy at birth improved for both sexes. A girl born in 2009 could expect to reach 83.9 years of age, while a boy could expect to live to 79.3 years. Over the decade, boys' life expectancy increased slightly more than girls' (3.1 compared with 2.1 years). This saw the gap between the sexes' life expectancy decrease by one year to 4.6 years.

For a more in-depth discussion about how health relates to progress and whether it is improving in Australia, please see the Health chapter in [Measures of Australia's Progress, 2010](#) (cat. no. 1370.0).

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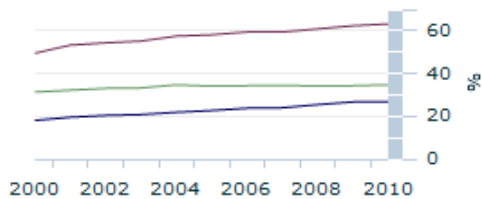
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Education & training

Persons aged 25-64 with a vocational or higher education qualification



■ Total(a)
■ With a vocational qu...
■ With a higher educat...

Save Chart Image

Footnote(s): (a) Includes people with a qualification which could not be categorised into either vocational qualification only or higher education qualification. (b) Some of these people may also have a vocational qualification.

Source(s): ABS data available on request, 2002-2010 Survey of Education and Work; ABS data available on request, 2000-2001 Transition from Education to Work Survey

Education and training help people to develop knowledge and skills that may be used to enhance their own wellbeing and that of the broader community. For an individual, education is widely regarded as a key factor in developing a rewarding career. For the nation, having a skilled work force is vital in supporting ongoing economic development and in improving living conditions.

Obtaining a vocational or higher education qualification allows individuals to engage with society, and may lead to fulfilling and rewarding careers.

Between 2000 and 2010, the proportion of people aged 25-64 years with a vocational or higher education qualification rose from 50% to 63%, continuing a trend seen for several decades.

This increase was largely driven by the rise in the proportion of people with a higher education qualification (i.e. a bachelor degree or above) - rising from 18% in 2000 to 27% in 2010. The proportion of people with a vocational qualification increased at a much slower pace, rising from 31% in 2000 to 35% in 2010, with most of this increase occurring prior to 2005.

For a more in-depth discussion about how education and training relates to progress and whether it is improving in Australia, please see the Education and training chapter in [Measures of Australia's Progress, 2010](#) (cat. no. 1370.0).

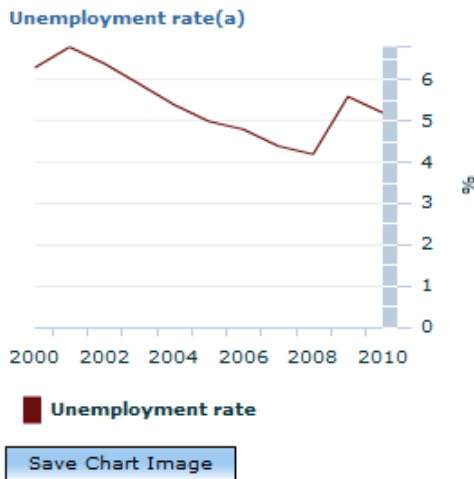
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Work



Footnote(s): (a) Annual average.

Source(s): ABS Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery Dec 2010 (cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

Paid work is the way in which most people obtain the economic resources they need for day-to-day living. Having paid work contributes to a person's sense of identity and self-esteem, while people's involvement in paid work also contributes to economic growth and development.

The unemployment rate is relevant to both the economic and social aspects of work. The unemployment rate is the most widely used measure of under utilised labour resources in the economy and is sensitive to changes in economic conditions. Generally, in recent decades, the unemployment rate has tended to rise quickly during economic downturns and fall slowly during periods of economic recovery. Unemployment can also have negative consequences upon the financial and psychological wellbeing of both individuals affected and their families.

For most of the last decade, the unemployment rate declined as a result of Australia's strong economic growth from a high of 6.8% in 2001 to a low of 4.2% in 2008. In the wake of the recent global financial crisis, the unemployment rate rose to 5.6% in 2009 before declining to 5.2% in 2010.

For a more in-depth discussion about how work relates to progress and whether it is improving in Australia, please see the Work chapter in [Measures of Australia's Progress, 2010](#) (cat. no. 1370.0).

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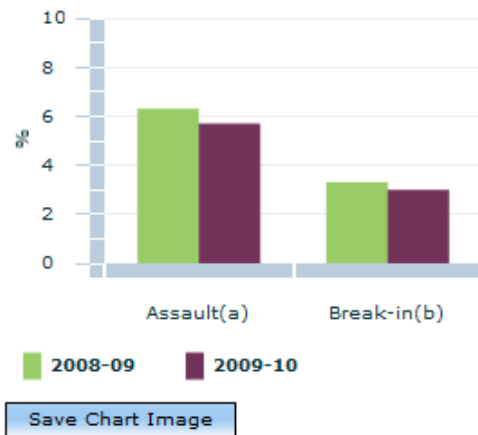
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Crime

Victims of assaults & break-ins



Footnote(s): (a) Proportion of people aged 15 years and over who reported experiencing a physical or threatened assault in the 12 months prior to interview. (b) Proportion of households who reported experiencing a break-in in the 12 months prior to interview.

Source(s): ABS Crime Victimisation, Australia, 2008-09 (cat. no. 4530.0); ABS Crime Victimisation, Australia 2009-10 (cat. no. 4530.0)

Crime in its many forms can impact the wellbeing of not only victims, but also their families, friends and the wider community. It has the potential to inflict financial, physical, emotional and psychological suffering upon those most directly affected. Fear of crime can affect people by restricting community engagement, reducing levels of trust and impacting on social cohesion. Crime is also costly on a wider scale in terms of the provision of law enforcement, legal and corrective services.

In 2009-10, of all Australians aged 15 years and over, 5.7% (just under one million persons) were victims of at least one assault (including physical assault and threatened assault) in the 12 months prior to interview. This was a decrease from 6.3% in 2008-09. In 2009-10, 57% of people who experienced assault were male.

Victims of household break-ins may experience financial losses and psychological distress due to feelings of vulnerability and associated stressors.

In 2009-10, 254,500 (3.0%) of Australia's 8.4 million households were victims of at least one break-in into their home, shed or garage in the 12 months prior to interview. There was no significant change since 2008-09 where 3.3% of households were a victim of a break-in.

For a more in-depth discussion about how crime relates to progress and whether it is improving in Australia, please see the Crime chapter in [Measures of Australia's Progress, 2010](#) (cat. no. 1370.0).

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Family, community & social cohesion

Families and communities are the building blocks of society and national life. The quality and strength of people's relationships and bonds with others - their family, friends and the wider community - are important ingredients of a cohesive and inclusive society. Families generate care and guidance which support the development of healthy functioning individuals and the values underlying civil society. The vast range of services provided within communities by groups, clubs and charitable organisations are a crucial adjunct to support the role of the family.

Currently, there is no one summary measure that adequately captures the way that family and community contribute to progress, nor an agreed summary measure of social cohesion and as such, there is no headline indicator for this dimension.

For a more in-depth discussion about how the dimension of family, community and social cohesion relates to progress and whether it is improving in Australia, please see the Family, community and social cohesion chapter in [Measures of Australia's Progress, 2010](#) (cat. no. 1370.0).

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Democracy, governance & citizenship

The wellbeing of society depends not only on the wellbeing of individual citizens, but also on the quality of our collective public life: on factors such as the fairness of our political system, the health of our democracy and the participation of citizens in public life.

While democracy, governance and citizenship is one of the headline dimensions for assessing whether life in Australia is getting better, it is difficult to find a single indicator that adequately captures this very wide dimension of progress, and consequently there is no headline indicator.

For a more in-depth discussion about how the dimension of democracy, governance and citizenship relates to progress and whether it is improving in Australia, please see the Democracy, governance and citizenship chapter in [Measures of Australia's Progress, 2010](#) (cat. no. 1370.0).

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Economy

The economy is a system of markets (e.g. goods, money, labour markets) which can be affected by market controls (eg, taxes and interest rates). These together generate production, stimulate consumption, and balance economic activities, so that Australia's population has access to income and wealth (in the form of assets) and the opportunity to consume goods and services. The more productive or efficient the economy is, the more income, wealth and consumption possibilities are available. Higher production may also assist the economy to be resilient in the face of international economic shocks.

The productive capacity of the economy is often measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which indicates the extent of production and consumption in the economy. GDP can also be taken as a measure of the competitiveness of the Australian economy. However, GDP is not directly related to wellbeing, rather it is a measure that measures the growth of the economy per se.

Theoretically, a productive economy means that more economic resources are available to all people. However, the wellbeing of society is more directly indicated by looking at the standard of living of individuals and families.

Having high income or reserves of wealth extends the range, quantity and quality of goods and services that can be consumed, and can indicate life success. Perhaps more importantly, people with limited resources can experience hardship in meeting the basic costs of living and may become dependent on others to have such needs met.

The effective distribution of income and wealth is therefore crucial in understanding whether all members of society have sufficient economic resources for basic needs such as housing, clothing and food. Productivity growth achieved, for instance, by increasing production from workers or capital investment is intended to support this distribution by improving living standards, resulting in more income available to be distributed.

In this commentary, economic progress equates to enhancing Australia's national income (broadly Australians' real per capita levels of consumption) while at least maintaining (or possibly enhancing) the national wealth that will support future consumption.

The headline dimensions that help Australians to assess whether our economy has progressed include:

- National income
- National wealth
- Household economic wellbeing
- Housing
- Productivity

National income reflects Australians' capacity to purchase goods and services, and is a key determinant of material living standards. A rise in real income means not only a rise in the capacity for current consumption, but also increased ability to accumulate wealth (e.g. houses, machinery, financial assets), which may be used to generate future income and support future consumption.

Along with the skills of the work force, a nation's wealth (in the form of economic assets) effects its capacity to generate income, and provides it with resilience to withstand economic shocks that affect income. For example, economic assets generate income when used in manufacturing (such as machinery and equipment), when extracted or harvested (such as minerals or crops), or when they return income flows to Australia (e.g. financial assets). Other assets, such as owner-occupied dwellings, provide consumption services direct to their owners.

The household economic wellbeing dimension reflects the principle that people should have access to some minimum material standard of living. This is largely determined by a household's command over its economic resources and its capacity for consumption of goods and services. Households with low income may be less likely to be able to support an acceptable standard of household economic wellbeing. A rise in household income indicates there is more disposable income to spend on needs, wants and accumulate wealth. A drop in household income puts more pressure on household budgets, and may lead to the

consumption of accumulated wealth.

Housing provides people with shelter, security and privacy, and having an adequate and appropriate place to live is fundamental to people's wellbeing. People who live in higher income households may have a wide range of housing choices, including having the choice to purchase a home. For people living in low income households, a primary concern may simply be access to shelter so, for these people, housing affordability becomes a more fundamental wellbeing issue. The number of people experiencing housing difficulties can also represent flow on costs to the wider society in the form of lost community cohesion and increased costs of community services.

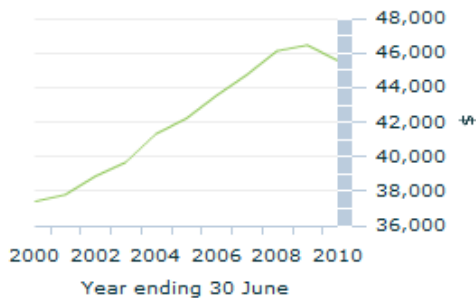
Productivity is an important measure of economic progress. Improvements in productivity mean the economy is using resources, such as capital, labour, energy or materials, more efficiently. While education and training improve the quality of the labour force over time, and are a key input into productivity, lack of innovation, research, development, or investment in assets can reduce productivity and thus Australia's ability to compete in the international market.

While not given headline status, 'Inflation' and 'Competitiveness and openness' are included as supplementary dimensions in MAP because of their relevance to whether life in Australia is getting better. For a discussion of these supplementary dimensions, please see the more comprehensive publication Measures of Australia's Progress, 2010 (cat. no. 1370.0).

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National income

Real net national disposable income(a)
per capita



RNNDI per capita

Save Chart Image

Footnote(s): (a) Real income measure: reference year 2008-09.

Source(s): ABS Australian System of National Accounts, 2009-10 (cat. no. 5204.0).

National income is an indicator of Australians' capacity to purchase goods and services for consumption. It is a determinant of material living standards and is also important for other aspects of progress. A rise in real income means not only a rise in the capacity for current consumption, but also increased ability to accumulate wealth (e.g. houses, machinery, financial assets), which may be used to generate future income and support future consumption.

Real net national disposable income is a key measure of Australia's economic wellbeing. It adjusts gross domestic product (GDP) for income flows between Australia and overseas, for changes in the relative prices of our exports and imports (the terms of trade) and for depreciation of fixed capital used in the production process, as these influences can increase or decrease the capacity of Australia and Australians to buy goods and services. These goods and services include food, clothing, housing, electricity, fuel, health care, transport, communications, recreation, social welfare and culture and education.

During the decade 1999-2000 to 2009-10, Australia's real net national disposable income per capita grew from \$37,400 to \$45,600, in 2008-09 dollars. Between 1999-2000 and 2008-09, there was an average annual increase in real net national disposable income of 2.4% (peaking at \$46,500 in 2008-09), followed by a decrease of 1.9% in to the final year of the decade. The 2009-10 decrease in real net national disposable income mainly reflects the first decline in the terms of trade since 1998-99 (down 4.8%).

For a more in-depth discussion about how national income relates to progress and whether it is improving in Australia, please see the National income chapter in [Measures of Australia's Progress, 2010](#) (cat. no. 1370.0).

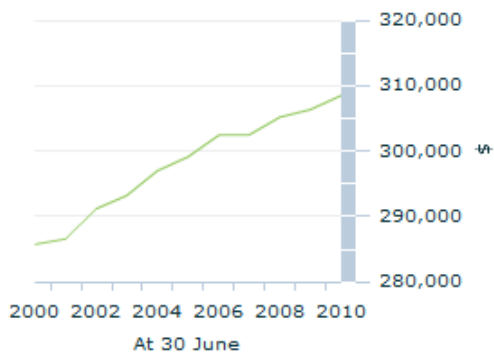
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National wealth

Real national net worth(a) per capita



RNNW per capita

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Footnote(s): (a) Reference period is year ending 30 June 2009.

Source(s): ABS Australian System of National Accounts, 2009-10 (cat. no. 5204.0).

A nation's wealth, along with the skills of the workforce, has a major effect on its capacity to generate income. Produced assets (such as machinery and equipment) are used in income-generating economic activity. Some natural assets (such as minerals and native timber) generate income at the time of their extraction or harvest. Holdings of financial assets with the rest of the world (such as foreign shares, deposits and loans) return income flows to Australia. Other assets, such as owner-occupied dwellings, provide consumption services direct to their owners.

Income that is saved rather than spent on current consumption allows for the accumulation of wealth that may generate income and support higher levels of consumption in the future.

The growth in a nation's wealth is the outcome of a wide variety of influences. Broadly, changes in real wealth reflect both accumulations of past saving or dissaving and changes in the relative prices of assets and liabilities.

Between June 2000 and June 2010, Australia's real national net worth per capita rose from \$285,700 in 2000 to \$308,500 (in 2008-09 prices), at an average annual rate of 0.8%. However, the growth was slower in the latter half of the decade (an average annual rate of change of 0.5% between 2006 and 2010 compared with 1.1% between 2001 and 2006).

For a more in-depth discussion about how national wealth relates to progress and whether it is improving in Australia, please see the National wealth chapter in [Measures of Australia's Progress, 2010](#) (cat. no. 1370.0).

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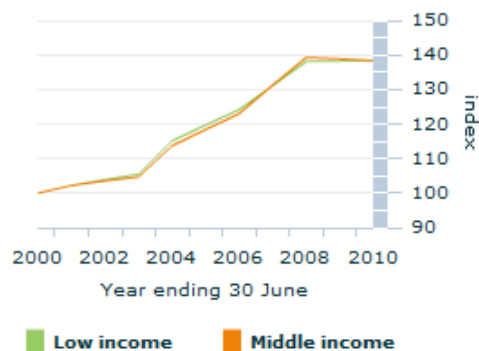
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Household economic wellbeing

Average real equivalised disposable household weekly income(a)(b)



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Footnote(s): (a) Base year is 1999-2000 and equals 100. Based on 2009-10 dollars, adjusted using changes in the Consumer Price Index. (b) Data have been interpolated for years ended 30 June 2002, 2005, 2007 and 2009.

Source(s): ABS data available on request, 1999-2000 - 2009-10 Survey of Income and Housing

Household economic wellbeing is largely determined by a household's command over its economic resources and, in turn, its ability to maintain a minimum material standard of living. Household economic resources provide the means through which households fund their consumption of goods and services. The economic resources of income (both in the form of receipts and as the direct provision by government of goods and services, such as free or subsidised healthcare) and wealth, and the availability of both to fund consumption, can be used to measure household economic wellbeing and progress.

For most people the level of income that they and other family members receive is a major determinant of household economic resources. People living in households with low income may be less likely to have sufficient economic resources to support an acceptable standard of living.

The average real equivalised disposable (after income tax) household weekly income of low income households and middle income households rose between 1999-2000 and 2009-10, up by 38% for both groups. However, part of this increase reflects improvements to the way income is measured from 2003-04 onwards (Endnote 1).

For a more in-depth discussion about how household economic wellbeing relates to progress and whether it is improving in Australia, please see the Household economic wellbeing chapter in Measures of Australia's Progress, 2010 (cat. no. 1370.0).

ENDNOTE

1. Estimates presented for 2007-08 and 2009-10 are not directly comparable with estimates for previous cycles due to the improvements made to measuring income introduced in the 2007-08 cycle. Estimates for 2003-04 and 2005-06 have been recompiled to reflect the new measures of income, however not all components introduced in 2007-08 are available for earlier cycles.

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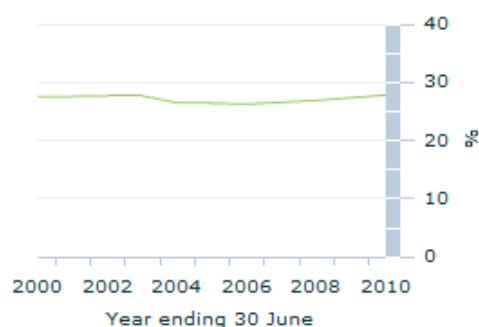
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Housing

Low income rental affordability(a)(b)



Private and public r...

Save Chart Image

Footnote(s): (a) Data have been interpolated for years ended 30 June 2002, 2005, 2007 and 2009. (b) See glossary for definitions of 'Low income renters' and 'Low income rental affordability'.

Source(s): ABS data available on request, Survey of Income and Housing

Housing provides people with shelter, security, and privacy. Having an adequate and appropriate place to live is fundamental to people's wellbeing. Improvements to the overall accessibility of appropriate housing for Australians is important in determining whether life in Australia is getting better.

Most Australian households are able to exercise a significant degree of choice over housing when making their decisions about the cost of living, savings and investment. But for many low income households, renting is often the only affordable option, and suitable rental dwellings can become less accessible when rents rise faster than incomes. When the proportion of housing costs to gross household income for low income renters increases, it indicates that households are required to spend more of their available income on housing. This may occur at the expense of other household costs or savings, and result in a decline in overall living standards. In contrast, if the proportion declines, then households will have less financial pressure in meeting their various non-housing costs of living, or saving requirements.

Rental affordability for low income households (that is the proportion of housing costs to gross income for low income renters) has remained constant over the past 10 years (28% in 1999-00 and 28% in 2009-10). (Endnote 1)

For a more in-depth discussion about how housing relates to progress and whether it is improving in Australia, please see the Housing chapter in Measures of Australia's Progress, 2010 (cat. no. 1370.0).

ENDNOTE

1. Estimates presented for 2007-08 and 2009-10 are not directly comparable with estimates for previous cycles due to the improvements made to measuring income introduced in the 2007-08 cycle. Estimates for 2003-04 and 2005-06 have been recompiled to reflect, to the extent possible, the new measures of income. However, not all new income components introduced in 2007-08 are available for earlier cycles.

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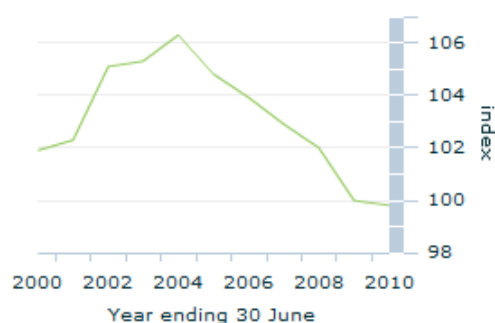
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Productivity

Multifactor productivity(a) in the market sector(b)



Multifactor producti...

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Footnote(s): a) Quality adjusted hours worked basis. Gross domestic product per combined unit of labour and capital. (b) Reference year is 2008-09 = 100.

Source(s): ABS Australian System of National Accounts, 2009-10 (cat. no. 5204.0)

Productivity is the efficiency with which an economy transforms inputs (such as labour and capital) into outputs (such as goods and services). When a nation achieves productivity growth, it is able to produce more goods and services from the same quantity of labour, capital, land, energy and other resources. In turn, improved production efficiency can generate higher real incomes and lead to long-term improvements in Australia's living standards. While education and training improve the quality of the labour force over time, and are a key input into productivity growth, lack of innovation, research, development, or investment in assets can reduce productivity growth and thus Australia's ability to compete in the international market.

The most comprehensive Australian measure of productivity available is multifactor productivity. It gauges the efficiency with which combined labour and capital inputs are transformed into outputs. In the short term, this reflects the impact of an array of factors, such as the utilisation of available labour and capital, economies of scale, and resource reallocation. In the long-term, it represents improvements in ways of doing things (technical progress), which is the ultimate source of economic growth and higher living standards.

Australia's productivity varied in the different growth cycles of the last decade, although negative growth in multifactor productivity in more recent years is stronger than the positive growth at the start of the decade. (Endnote 1)

Across the productivity growth cycle of 1998-99 to 2003-04, output growth (3.5%) was higher than growth in inputs (2.7%) meaning that there was an overall positive growth in multifactor productivity (0.8%). However, in the most recent productivity growth cycle, 2003-04 to 2007-08, growth in inputs (4.5%) was stronger than growth in outputs (3.4%) and multifactor productivity therefore experienced negative growth (-1.0%).

For more in-depth discussion about how productivity relates to progress and whether it is improving in Australia, please see the Productivity chapter in Measures of Australia's Progress, 2010 (cat. no. 1370.0).

ENDNOTE

1. The headline indicator for the dimension of Productivity has changed since the last release. The new measure, multifactor productivity in the market sector based on quality adjusted hours worked, is a refinement of the measure used previously and is considered the most appropriate measure.

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Environment

Australia's natural environment is fundamental to the quality of life and wellbeing of Australians, as well as providing key inputs to the economy. Until recently there has been a tendency to take clean water, clean air and natural attractions such as the Great Barrier Reef for granted. However, increasing population and economic pressures have caused many people to be increasingly concerned about the state of both the Australian and wider global environment.

In this commentary, progress refers to a reduction in threats to the natural environment and improvements in the health of our ecosystems.

The headline dimensions that help Australians assess whether our environment has progressed include:

- Biodiversity
- Land
- Inland waters
- Oceans and estuaries
- Atmosphere
- Waste

Our plants, animals and ecosystems bring important economic and social benefits and Australia's unique environmental assets are recognised globally. Native vegetation has cultural, aesthetic and recreational importance to many Australians. Most importantly, the ways in which organisms interact with each other and their environment are important to human survival: we rely on ecosystems that function properly for clean air and water and healthy soil.

Soil resources are an important natural asset. Degraded soil affects agricultural productivity, wildlife habitat and water quality.

Water is fundamental to the survival of people and other organisms. Apart from drinking water, much of our economy (agriculture in particular) relies on water. The condition of freshwater ecosystems has a critical impact on the wider environment, especially for sustaining native wildlife and vegetation.

Our beaches, estuaries and wider marine ecosystems play an important role in Australian life. The oceans support a vast array of marine life and many of our marine ecosystems are globally important, such as the Great Barrier Reef which is the largest coral reef system in the world.

The atmosphere surrounding our planet plays a role in supporting life on earth: oxygen is required to sustain living animals; a layer of ozone shields us from harmful ultraviolet rays from the sun; and greenhouse gases, predominantly carbon dioxide, maintain the surface temperature of the earth at levels that can sustain life. Poor air quality has a range of negative impacts: it can cause health problems, damage infrastructure, reduce crop yields and harm plants and animals. Greenhouse gases and air pollution occur both naturally and as a result of human activities.

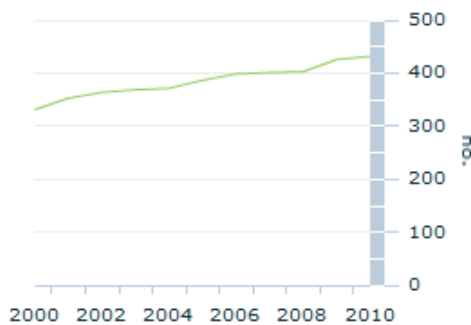
Waste is a by-product of many human activities. Many economic activities generate waste - solid, liquid and gaseous wastes are a by-product of many productive processes, and goods (or their packages) may be discarded by consumers. Waste can be expensive to deal with, can have a damaging impact on the environment, and can affect peoples health and wellbeing.

The presentation of these dimensions is largely consistent with other major environmental reports, most notably the State of the Environment report produced five yearly under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999 (EPBC Act).



Biodiversity

Threatened fauna species



Threatened fauna spe...

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Source(s): Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPaC), 'EPBC Act List of Threatened fauna'. Current list is available on-line, although historical data is sourced directly from SEWPaC; www.environment.gov.au.

Biodiversity is essential to the wellbeing of Australia and its people, with native plants, animals and other organisms contributing to a healthy environment. Aside from aiding the maintenance of clean water, clean air and healthy soils, they also provide significant economic benefits, for example, through tourism, agriculture, and a variety of cultural and recreational services.

Threatened fauna are a small part of overall biodiversity, yet an increase in the endangered status of listed species threatens ecological processes and can point to a wider decline in biodiversity. This provides an indication of decline in overall biodiversity and how it is changing over time.

Over the past decade, the number of threatened fauna species has increased from 332 in 2000 to 432 in 2010. Of the list of threatened fauna species, just under half (46%) were listed as vulnerable, around two-fifths (41%) were listed as endangered or critically endangered, and just over one in ten (13%) were listed as extinct.

For a more in-depth discussion about how biodiversity relates to progress and whether it is improving in Australia, please see the Biodiversity chapter in [Measures of Australia's Progress, 2010](#) (cat. no. 1370.0).

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Land

The land on which Australians live is essential for their wellbeing. It provides the foundation for animals and plants to flourish, with functioning ecosystems providing clean water, clean air and healthy soils as well as maintaining our unique biological diversity.

There is currently no headline indicator for the land dimension that adequately summarises landscapes, biodiversity and ecosystem services.

For a more in-depth discussion about how land relates to progress and whether it is improving in Australia, please see the Land chapter in [Measures of Australia's Progress, 2010](#) (cat. no. 1370.0).

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Inland waters

Water is fundamental to the survival of people and other organisms. Apart from drinking water, much of our economy (agriculture, in particular) relies on water. Furthermore, the condition of freshwater ecosystems has a critical impact on the wider environment.

Fresh water is a finite and scarce resource in many areas of Australia. Consumption of fresh water potentially depletes water storages in dams and reduces river flows, which can be environmentally and economically detrimental.

There is currently no headline indicator for the inland waters dimension that takes into account the quantity and the quality of water available, and the health of Australia's inland water ecosystems. Measuring inland water use is also problematic due to fluctuating weather patterns and resulting inconsistent user demands.

For a more in-depth discussion about how inland waters relate to progress and whether they are improving in Australia, please see the Inland waters chapter in [Measures of Australia's Progress, 2010](#) (cat. no. 1370.0).

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Oceans & estuaries

Australia's oceans are diverse, ranging from tropical seas, through temperate to polar waters; and from shallow coastal waters to ocean trenches. The oceans support a vast array of marine life and many of our marine ecosystems are globally important, such as the Great Barrier Reef which is the largest coral reef system in the world.

Despite its importance to Australia, there is no comprehensive and nationally consistent system for measuring the condition of Australia's ocean and coastal ecosystems. For this reason there is no headline indicator for this dimension.

For a more in-depth discussion about how oceans and estuaries relate to progress and whether they are improving in Australia, please see the Oceans and estuaries chapter in [Measures of Australia's Progress, 2010](#) (cat. no. 1370.0).

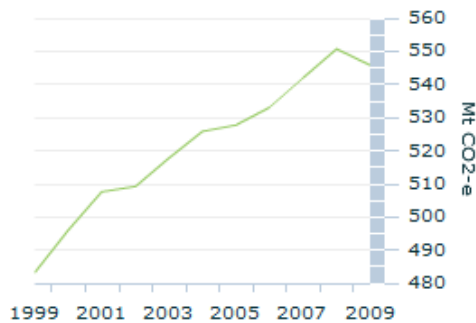
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Atmosphere

Net greenhouse gas emissions(a)



Net greenhouse gas e...

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Footnote(s): (a) Excludes emissions from land use, land use change and forestry sector.

Source(s): Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency; 2011, National Greenhouse Gas Inventory; www.climatechange.gov.au

The atmosphere is an essential component of all ecological systems on Earth. The atmosphere plays a critical role in regulating global, regional and local climate and is essential in supporting life on Earth. Oxygen is required for life, stratospheric ozone protects us from harmful solar radiation, and greenhouse gases help to maintain a temperature range suitable for life.

Greenhouse gases (primarily carbon dioxide and methane) occur naturally in the atmosphere, trapping the sun's warmth to enable the Earth's surface temperature to support life. Human activities, particularly the burning of fossil fuels (e.g. coal, oil and gas), have increased the atmospheric concentrations of these gases, which means they trap more heat, thereby contributing to global warming and climate change. (Endnote 1)

In the decade to 2009, Australia's greenhouse gas emissions increased by 13%, rising from 483.2 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent gases in 1999 to 545.8 million tonnes in 2009. Although emissions increased for most of the decade, there was a decrease in 2009 from a peak of 550.8 million tonnes in 2008.

The decline in overall greenhouse gas emissions between 2008 and 2009 was contributed to by declines in emissions from several areas. Relating to a broader economic slowdown at the time, there were declines in emissions from both fuel combustion within manufacturing industries and construction, and from metal production. In the agriculture sector, there were reductions in emission from both controlled burning, which can be quite variable, and from livestock. (Endnote 2)

For a more in-depth discussion about how the atmosphere relates to progress and whether it is improving in Australia, please see the Atmosphere chapter in Measures of Australia's Progress, 2010 (cat. no. 1370.0).

ENDNOTE

1. CSIRO 2009, The Science of Tackling Climate Change, CSIRO, Melbourne, <www.csiro.au>, last viewed August 2011.
2. Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, 2011, *National Greenhouse Gas Inventory*, <www.climatechange.gov.au>.

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Waste

Waste generation accompanies all human activities in the form of solid, liquid and gaseous waste and comes from households, building and demolition sites and the industrial sector.

Waste is expensive to deal with and has a damaging impact on the environment, affects people's health and can even influence trade in the economy. The volume of waste that a society produces is an indicator of resource use and of the by-products of consumption, determined by production and consumption patterns.

No headline indicator is available for this dimension.

For a more in-depth discussion about how waste relates to progress and whether it is improving in Australia, please see the Waste chapter in Measures of Australia's Progress, 2010 (cat. no. 1370.0).

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Glossary

Assault

Assault is comprised of physical assault and threatened assault (definitions below).

Asset

Assets are entities functioning as stores of value and over which ownership rights are enforced by institutional units, individually or collectively, and from which economic benefits may be derived by their owners by holding them, or using them, over a period of time (the economic benefits consist of primary incomes derived from the use of the asset and the value, including possible holding gains/losses, that could be realised by disposing of the asset or terminating it). See 'Financial assets' and 'non-financial assets'.

Biodiversity

The variety of all life forms on earth - the different plants, animals and micro-organisms, the genes they contain and the ecosystems which they form part of.

Break-in

An incident where the respondent's home (primary residence) was broken into. Includes break-ins to garage, shed or any detached secure building such as games/hobby room etc. Caravans were only included if it was the respondent's permanent residence. Break-in incidents relating to a respondent's car or front or rear yard were excluded.

Carbon dioxide equivalents

Provides the basis for comparing the warming effect of different greenhouse gases. Different greenhouse gases have different effects and remain in the atmosphere for different periods of time. A tonne of methane, for example, contributes as much to global warming as 21 tonnes of carbon dioxide and thus has a Global Warming Potential (GWP) of 21, compared to carbon dioxide's GWP of 1. Each gas has a GWP so that each can be converted to a common CO₂ equivalent (CO₂-e). This enables emissions of different greenhouse gases to be compared and aggregated by converting them to carbon dioxide equivalents (CO₂-e).

Climate Change

A change in the weather over periods of time that range from decades to millions of years. It can be a change in the average weather or a change in the distribution of weather events around an average (for example, greater or fewer extreme weather events). Climate change may be limited to a specific region, or may occur across the whole earth. In recent usage, climate change usually refers to changes in modern climate, and is often referred to as global warming.

Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA)

Where applicable, Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) has been excluded from the housing costs and gross income of recipients. CRA is a non-taxable income supplement paid through Centrelink to individuals and families who rent in the private rental market. It is only paid to recipients of another government benefit or pension, and is paid in conjunction with that other benefit. In this section, CRA payments have been modelled based on Centrelink eligibility requirements. Characteristics collected in the Survey of Income and Housing, such as the family and household composition, ages, type of government payments received, current weekly income from government allowances, rental payments and the tenure and landlord details, are used to calculate the eligibility and amount of CRA for each income unit within the survey sample.

Conservation Status

The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999 (Cwlth) classifies listed threatened species (fauna or flora) into six categories: extinct; extinct in the wild; critically endangered; endangered; vulnerable; and conservation dependent. The Act also classifies listed threatened communities into three categories: critically endangered; endangered; and vulnerable.

Disposable income

Gross income less income tax and the Medicare levy, i.e. remaining income after direct taxes are deducted, which is available to support consumption and/or saving. Income tax and the Medicare levy are imputed based on each person's income and other characteristics as reported in the survey. Disposable income is sometimes referred to as net income.

Employed

All persons aged 15 years and over who, during the reference week:

- worked for one hour or more for pay, profit, commission or payment in kind in a job or business, or on a farm (comprising employees, employers and own account workers); or
- worked for one hour or more without pay in a family business or on a farm (i.e. contributing family workers); or
- were employees who had a job but were not at work and were:
 - away from work for fewer than four weeks up to the end of the reference week; or
 - away from work for more than four weeks up to the end of the reference week and received pay for some or all of the four week period to the end of the reference week; or
 - away from work as a standard work or shift arrangement; or
 - on strike or locked out; or
 - on workers' compensation and expected to return to their job; or
- were employers or own account workers, who had a job, business or farm, but were not at work.

Endangered

Strong evidence that a species faces a very high risk of extinction in the near future.

Equivalised income

Measures of household income (including the headline indicator) and wealth are adjusted or equivalised to take account of differing household size and composition. The equivalised measure factors in the sharing of income between household members and takes into account the economies of scale that arise from the sharing of dwellings, whilst also recognising that larger households need greater income levels to maintain the same standard of living as smaller households. The equivalence factor used gives a weighting of 1.0 to the first (or only) adult, a weight of 0.5 for each additional adult aged 15 years and over, and a weight of 0.3 for each child aged under 15. The equivalised income or wealth of lone person households is the same as the unequivalised value. For households comprising multiple people, the equivalised value is less than the total unequivalised value but greater than the per person share of the unequivalised value.

Estimated resident population (ERP)

The official measure of the population of Australia is based on the concept of usual residence. It refers to all people, regardless of nationality or citizenship, who usually live in Australia, with the exception of foreign diplomatic personnel and their families. It includes usual residents who are overseas for less than 12 months. It excludes overseas visitors who are in Australia for less than 12 months.

Extinct

There is no reasonable doubt that the last member of a species has died.

Fauna

The animals of a given region or period, taken collectively (as distinguished from the plants or flora).

Financial assets

Financial assets are mostly financial claims. Financial claims entitle the owner to receive a payment, or a series of payments, from an institutional unit to which the owner has provided funds. The exceptions are monetary gold, Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), and shares, which are treated as financial assets even though there is no financial claim on another institutional unit.

Financial assets include insurance technical reserves, monetary gold, SDRs, other accounts receivable/payable, securities other than shares, and shares and other equity.

Financial assets with the rest of the world

Foreign financial assets held by Australians (such as foreign shares, deposits and loans). See 'Financial assets'.

Greenhouse gases

A collective term for those gases which reduce the loss of heat from the earth's atmosphere and thus contribute to global warming and climate change. Examples of greenhouse gases are water vapour, carbon dioxide, atmospheric methane, nitrous oxide, ozone and chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs).

Gross domestic product (GDP)

The total market value of goods and services produced in Australia within a given period after deducting the cost of goods and services used up in the process of production but before deducting allowances for the consumption of fixed capital. Thus gross domestic product, as here defined, is 'at market prices'. It is equivalent to gross national expenditure plus exports of goods and services less imports of goods and services.

Gross national expenditure (GNE)

The total expenditure within a given period by Australian residents on final goods and services (i.e. excluding goods and services used up during the period in the process of production). It is equivalent to gross domestic product plus imports of goods and services less exports of goods and services.

See 'Real gross domestic income' and 'Gross domestic product (GDP)'.

Higher education qualifications

Include Postgraduate Degree, Master Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate and Bachelor Degree.

Labour force

For any group, persons who were employed or unemployed, as defined.

Liabilities to the rest of the world

Liabilities owed by Australian residents to overseas entities. Australia's liabilities to the rest of the world include borrowings from overseas and foreign holdings of Australian currency, shares and other securities.

Life expectancy

Life expectancy refers to the average number of additional years a person of a given age and sex might expect to live if the age-specific death rates of the given period continued throughout his/her lifetime.

Low income group

Refers to the 20% of people in the second and third lowest income deciles after being ranked from lowest to highest, by their equivalised disposable household income.

Low income rental affordability

Housing costs as a proportion of gross household income for low income renters.

Low income renters

For the housing section, low income renter households are defined as households with equivalised disposable household income (excluding CRA) at or below the 40th percentile, calculated for capital city and balance of state, on a state-by-state basis. See also 'Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA)'.

Multifactor productivity

Multifactor productivity (MFP) is the part of output growth that cannot be attributed to the growth of labour or capital inputs. MFP reflects such things as business process innovations, advances in technology, or almost any other type of improvement in the efficiency of a firm's operations. When MFP rises, the economy can produce more output with the same quantity of labour and capital. MFP can be equated with technological change if certain conditions are met (e.g. firms seek to maximise profits, markets are competitive, and the coverage of inputs is complete). Because these conditions are typically not met, measured MFP will, in addition to technological change, include the effects of model misspecification and errors in the measurement of the variables.

National assets

The sum of non-financial assets (produced and non-produced) and financial assets with the rest of the world owned by Australian residents. See 'Asset', 'Financial assets with the rest of the world', 'Non-financial assets', 'Produced assets', 'Non-produced assets' and 'Resident'.

National liabilities

See 'Liabilities to the rest of the world'.

National net worth

National assets less national liabilities. See 'National assets' and 'National liabilities'.

Natural increase

Excess of births over deaths.

Net overseas migration (NOM)

Net overseas migration is the net gain or loss of population through immigration to Australia and emigration from Australia. It is:

- based on an international traveller's duration of stay being in or out of Australia for 12 months or more;
- the difference between the number of incoming travellers who stay in Australia for 12 months or more, who **are not** currently counted in the population, and are then added to the population (NOM arrivals); and the number of outgoing travellers (Australian residents and long-term visitors to Australia) who leave Australia for 12 months or more, who **are** currently counted within the population, and are then subtracted from the population (NOM departures).

The current method for estimating net overseas migration is based on a traveller's **actual** duration of stay or absence using the 12/16 rule, i.e. the duration of stay or absence does not have to be continuous and is measured over a 16 month period. Preliminary estimates are modelled on patterns of traveller behaviours observed in final NOM estimates for the same period one year earlier (for more information refer to ABS Australian Demographic Statistics, cat. no. 3101.0 or ABS Migration, Australia, cat. no. 3412.0).

Estimates for September quarter 2006 onwards use an improved methodology; caution should be

exercised when comparing estimates over time.

Non-financial assets

Any asset that is not in the form of a financial claim on another economic unit, monetary gold or a statutory reserve deposit at the International Monetary Fund.

Non-produced assets

Non-produced assets are non-financial assets that come into existence other than through processes of production.

People with a vocational or higher education qualification

Proportion of people with either a vocational or higher education qualification (includes those whose level could not be determined).

There has been a break in the time series that is considered to have impacted on the comparability of data relating to qualifications: In 2001, the ABSCQ was replaced by the Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED) cat. no. 1272.0. The ASCED is a national standard classification, which can be applied to all sectors of the Australian education system.

Physical assault

An incident where anyone used physical force or violence against a respondent. Physical force or violence includes being: pushed, grabbed, shoved, slapped, hit with an open hand or fist, kicked or bitten. It also includes being hit with something else that could hurt a respondent i.e. a bat, hammer, belt, pot, ruler, etc. It includes being beaten, choked, stabbed, shot, burnt, dragged or hit deliberately by a vehicle. Includes assault in a respondent's line of work. It excludes incidents that occurred during the course of play on a sporting field, verbal abuse, and incidents of sexual assault or threatened sexual assault which also involved physical assault.

Population growth

The sum of natural increase and net overseas migration.

Produced assets

Produced assets are non-financial assets that have come into existence as outputs from production processes. Produced assets consist of fixed assets and inventories.

Real gross domestic income

Calculated by:

- taking the volume measure of gross national expenditure (GNE)
- adding exports of goods and services at current prices deflated by the implicit price deflator for imports of goods and services
- deducting the volume measure of imports of goods and services
- adding the current price statistical discrepancy for GDP(E) deflated by the implicit price deflator for GDP.

In the derivation of the aggregate all of the adjustments are made using the chain volume aggregation method used to derive all of the ABS chain volume estimates.

See 'Gross national expenditure (GNE)' and 'Real net national disposable income (RNNDI)'.

Real (income or wealth)

It is possible to deflate measures of income and wealth by a price index in order to measure purchasing power. By comparing the deflated value of the income with the actual value of the income, it is possible to

determine by how much the purchasing power of the income or wealth has increased or decreased. Aggregates deflated in this way are generally described as "real". Real income or wealth is measured with reference to the price level in some selected reference year. Thus real values cannot exist in isolation, rather they vary depending upon the choice of reference year. In this product the all groups CPI is used to deflate income and wealth estimates.

Real net national disposable income (RNNDI)

Calculated by:

- taking real gross domestic income
- deducting real incomes payable to the rest of the world
- adding real incomes receivable from the rest of the world
- deducting the volume measure of consumption of fixed capital.

Real incomes payable and receivable are calculated by dividing the nominal income flows by the implicit price deflator for gross national expenditure. In the derivation of the aggregate, all of the adjustments are made using the chain volume aggregation method used to derive all of the ABS chain volume estimates.

See 'Real gross domestic income'.

Real net national disposable income (RNNDI) per capita

The ratio of RNNDI to the estimated resident population (ERP) of Australia. Population estimates use data published in the quarterly publication ABS Australian Demographic Statistics (cat. no. 3101.0). See 'Real net national disposable income (RNNDI)'.

Real net national worth per capita

The ratio of Real net national worth to the estimated resident population (ERP) of Australia. Population estimates use data published in the quarterly publication ABS Australian Demographic Statistics (cat. no. 3101.0). See 'Real' and 'National net worth'.

Resident

Residents are those entities that have a closer association with the territory of Australia than with any other territory. Examples are: general government bodies; financial and trading enterprises and non-profit bodies producing goods or services or both within the territory of Australia; and persons whose centre of interest is considered to lie in Australia. Any entity which is not determined to be a resident of Australia is classified as a resident of the rest of the world.

Rest of the world

The rest of the world consists of all non-resident institutional units that enter into transactions with resident units, or have other economic links with resident units.

Threatened assault

Includes any verbal and/or physical intent or suggestion of intent to inflict physical harm, which the person believed was able and likely to be carried out. Includes a threat or attempt to hit with a fist or anything else that could hurt, threats or attempts to slap, punch, spank or hit in any way with a fist or weapon such as a bat, hammer or pot, situations where a gun was left in an obvious place or if the person knew that the perpetrator had access to a gun. Includes toy guns, starter pistols etc. if the respondent believed they were real. Also includes incidents where a respondent was threatened in their line of work (e.g. while working as a security guard).

Includes both face-to-face and non face-to-face threatened assault.

Total fertility rate (TFR)

The sum of age-specific fertility rates (live births at each age of mother per female population of that age).

It represents the number of children a female would bear during her lifetime if she experienced current age-specific fertility rates at each age of her reproductive life.

Unemployed

Persons aged 15 years and over who were not employed during the reference week, and

- had actively looked for full-time or part-time work at any time in the four weeks up to the end of the reference week and were available for work in the reference week; or
- were waiting to start a new job within four weeks from the end of the reference week and could have started in the reference week if the job had been available then.

Unemployment rate

The number of unemployed persons expressed as a percentage of the labour force.

Victim

A household or person reporting at least one of the crimes surveyed. Victims were counted once only for each type of crime, regardless of the number of incidents of that type.

Victimisation rate

The total number of victims of a given crime in a given population (who have been a victim of the crime at least once in the reference period) expressed as a percentage of that population. This is the most common measure derived from crime victim surveys.

Vocational education qualifications

Include Advanced Diploma, Diploma and Certificates I to IV (and certificate not further defined).

Vulnerable

Strong evidence that a species faces a high risk of extinction in the medium term.

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